

Heritage Statement



Address: 7 The Hill, Northfleet Kent DA11 9EU

Client: Mr B Randhawa

Proposal: Application for Listed Building Consent for the demolition of an existing single storey extension and ad-hoc outbuildings and the erection of a single storey extension to provide a ground floor studio flat and extension to the existing pharmacy.

Prepared by:



BARRON EDWARDS
PLANNING & ARCHITECTURE

2 February 2023

1.1 This Heritage Statement has been prepared on behalf of Mr B Randhawa in support of the Planning and Listed Building applications for the demolition of an existing rear extension and removal of a number of random outbuildings and the erection of a single storey rear extension to provide a self-contained studio flat and an extension to the existing pharmacy at Hill Pharmacy 7 The Hill Northfleet DA11 9EU

Single Application Plan

- Statement

- ## 2.0 Site and Surroundings

2.1 The application site fronts The Hill, it's principal elevation which accommodates the access to the ground floor A1 retail unit and has a large shop front to its eastern side fronting The Hill. The building is on the corner of the main road, The Hill, and a one way 'frontage road' which allows access and parking to a parade of shops and various other commercial uses. The entrance to the residential flats above the retail unit is on the NW elevation which is faces onto the parking area in front of the retail units.

2.2 The building is an 18th Century grade II listed building and within The Hill Conservation Area

2.3 The building is currently arranged as A1 retail on ground floor with self-contained flats on the upper floors. The flats had been in place for a number of years and were subject of enforcement investigations for alterations to its fabric which were regularised in 2015 following discussions with the Conservation Officer to reinstate original architectural features by way of enhancement to the heritage asset.

Listed Status

2.4 The building was listed in 1983, English Heritage gave the following description; *18th century house of 2-storeys and attic with red brick and blue header walls with modillion eaves cornice north and west, weatherboarded east (rear) elevations, (south wall abuts adjoining property), and tiled half-hipped roof. North-west corner has canopied 19th century shop fronts and door, other windows to ground, first floor and attic are appropriate modern replacements.*

Image from 1955



2.5 The listing makes no comment about the rear extension, or its construction, which is used as a consulting room for the pharmacy but is now in need of urgent repair and coming to the end of its useful life. The attached outbuilding was granted permission to be used as storage in 1998. These building are similar in poor condition and in need of replacement. We are

satisfied that the removal of the substandard structures and their replacement will enhance the building and ensure its retention as a heritage asset.

3.0 Planning History

3.1 The application site was erect pre-1800 at the same time as St Botolphs Church, also Grade II, but before its immediate neighbours that were constructed in the mid 1850's. This character area is notable for the varied character of the buildings and their arrangement around the former village green. There is a contrast between the heavily built up perimeter, with buildings clustered along the edge of the pavement, and the open space at the centre which is filled with only an open shelter, some seating, young trees and parked cars. It is important to note the area around the former green vary greatly in their architecture and appearance from other parts of the CA.

3.2 Bordering the former village green, no.7 The Hill, now a pharmacy, is an 18th century house, formerly a butcher's shop and slaughterhouse. This has fine quality brickwork and an altered 19th century canopied shopfront. Its neighbours, which also face the green to the north, are two three storey two-bay Georgian houses, one of which (No. 8) has been unsympathetically altered. They are adjoined by a terrace of four two-storey 19th century buildings, in which on ground floor level a longstanding funeral director's business has a traditional style shopfront across and a pair of timber cart doors

3.2 The applicant has owned the property since 1986, he maintains that during his ownership no alterations requiring listed building consent or planning permission have been made to the accommodation to enable its use as flats. He has stated that the flats have been in use in their current arrangement since his purchase of the property and that only works of refurbishment had been undertaken. However he agreed to regularise the internal changes and modern windows by the 2015 application. Following discussions with the Council's Conservation advisor.

4.0 Planning Policy

Development Plan Policy

4.1 Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, requires that, when making a determination under the Planning Acts, the determination shall be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Article 35 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015,

requires that, when issuing a decision, councils must also include a statement explaining, whether, and if so how, in dealing with the application, the local planning authority have worked with the applicant in a positive and proactive manner based on seeking solutions to problems arising in relation to dealing with a planning application. The NPPF sets out the government's planning policies for England and how they are expected to be applied. It emphasises that planning applications that accord with the policies in the Council's Local Plan will be approved without delay, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

National Planning Policy

4.2 National planning policy is enshrined within the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) issued in July 2021 and its accompanying revised the Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). The PPG seeks to set out how to implement the strategic vision contained within the NPPF.

4.3 With regards to decision-taking, the revised NPPF advises that local planning authorities should approach decision-taking in a positive way to foster the delivery of sustainable development and should look for solutions rather than problems. Decision-takers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible.

4.4 Paragraph 7 of the NPPF states that, "the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development". It goes on at paragraph 8, that there are three dimensions of sustainable development as: economic, social and environmental. Paragraph 10 of the NPPF states that a "presumption in favour of sustainable development" which is at the heart of the Framework to ensure that sustainable development is pursued in a positive way. Paragraph 11 which states that there is a **'presumption in favour of sustainable development'**. Para.12 goes on that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not change the status of the development plan and states that where a development that is contrary to an up to date development plan that permission should not be granted.

4.5 Paragraph 126 says that the Government attaches great importance to the creation of high quality beautiful and sustainable buildings and that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, which creates better places in which to live and work. Quality of design is indivisible from good planning and should contribute positively to making places better for people. The

Council does not have any design guides or codes as a supplementary planning document. Paragraph 130 states that planning policies and decisions should ensure that developments:-

- Will function well and add to the overall quality of the area, not just for the short term but over the lifetime of the development.
- Are visually attractive as a result of good architecture, layout and appropriate and effective landscaping.
- Are sympathetic to local character and history Including surrounding built environment and landscaped setting.
- Establish a strong sense of place, using streetscapes and buildings to create attractive, welcoming and distinctive places to live, work and visit.
- Optimise the potential of the site.
- Create places that are safe, which promote health and wellbeing with a high standard of amenity for existing and future users.

4.6 Paragraphs 131 states that trees make a contribution to the character and quality of urban environment and we are content that the site is predominantly urban in nature. We would therefore confirm that the tree and hedge to the eastern boundary will be retained and enhanced where necessary.

4.7 Paragraph 134 has been altered to reflect that developments that are not well designed should be refused where it fails to reflect local design policies and government guidance. These should lead to an improvement of the character and quality of the area and how it functions.

4.8 However the main policy implications for the proposal relate to the preservation and enhancement of established heritage assets and the Harmer Street Conservation Area generally. Paragraphs 189 to 207 of the Revised NPPF deal with conserving and enhancing the historic environment with much emphasis on “significance”, defined in Annex 2 as: “The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. That interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance

derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting."

4.9 Paragraph 190 says that local authorities should have a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets at risk through neglect or decay. This being achieved by:

- a) The desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses.
- b) The wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation can bring
- c) The desirability of **new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness**
- d) Opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place. .

4.10 Paragraph 195 requires LPAs to identify and assess the "the particular significance of any heritage asset". This should be taken into account when considering the impact of a proposal on a heritage asset, including by development affecting its setting. Paragraph 197 is particularly relevant, in requiring LPAs to take account of the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation. Paragraph 200 applies specifically to designated heritage assets. It states that great weight should be given to their conservation and it requires a proportionate approach (i.e. the more important the asset, the greater the weight attached to its conservation). Paragraph 201 adds further to this by emphasising the importance of ensuring that any alterations or modifications are in keeping and character with the Conservation area and ensure the preservation of the heritage asset itself

Local Development Plan

Gravesham Local Plan Core Strategy

4.11 The following policies have been taken into consideration in the formulation of this appeal statement:

- Policy CS01 – Sustainable Development
- Policy CS02 – Scale and Distribution of Development
- Policy CS19 – Development and Design Principles
- Policy CS20 - Heritage and the Historic Environment.

Harmer Street Conservation Area Character Appraisal (2009)

Gravesham Local Plan First Review 1994 Saved Policies

4,12 The following policies are relevant to the consideration of this appeal:

- Policy P3: Vehicle Parking Standards
- Policy TC 3: Development affecting Conservation Areas

5.0 Planning Considerations

5.1 It is our opinion that the main considerations of this case would be the acceptability of the proposals and their impact on the setting of the character of the area; and the restoration and refurbishment of the heritage asset.

Impact on the Character of the area:

5.2 The proposal will not have any material effect on the character of the Conservation Area as the works will require the demolition of unsightly outbuildings and the existing substandard extension. This will be rebuilt and enlarged with internal re-arrangement of the existing pharmacy to provide new modern dispensary area and consultation rooms. The retail area will be reduced in size and coupled with the former dispensing area will be converted to a single bedsit unit. This will be accessed from the existing lobby area which serves the residential flats on the upper floors. Externally there will be very little change in the visual appearance that would impact on the setting of the building or CA as a whole. There would be no substantive change in the street scene with the main changes being in the southern elevation that is not visible from the street. We are therefore satisfied that the proposal will enhance the visual impact of the building and preserve the continued use of the heritage asset. The proposal can only be considered to improve and enhance the building and the Conservation Area as a whole.

5.3 Paragraphs 126, 129 and 132 of the NPPF all look at conserving and enhancing the historic environment with specific emphasis at restoring and preserving heritage assets. We are satisfied that the application site is clearly an asset worthy of preservation and restoration and the application proposal will see the building revert to its former glory.

Impact on Residential Amenity

5.4 The prospective layout shows that the proposed flat would be accessed from the existing shared residential lobby. This would open into an open plan lounge/kitchen area with light being achieved from the existing window overlooking the green. To rear of this would be a double bedroom with en-suite toilet facilities with access to a rear amenity area which provides a secondary means of access to The Hill. No new windows or openings are proposed to the external fabric that will impact on the building or CA and the appearance of the building will remain unchanged. The only new windows will be in the southern elevation that looks onto the blank flank wall of No.6. We are satisfied that the flat is of an acceptable standard of accommodation and would be in accord with the Council's residential layout standards and in keeping with Policy CS 19 the Council's Core Strategy.

Access & Parking

5.5 The property has no off-street parking at present although there are off-street parking facilities immediately outside the property within the square. The proposal seeks to continue the use of the property as small retail unit and provide a small unit of residential unit to meet the council's unfulfilled housing shortfall. We are advised that the existing tenants have not generated any problems by virtue of vehicular movements to the property. The property is located on the main A206 and has several bus links to Gravesend Town centre and to Blue Water Retail Centre. In addition the site is a few minutes walk from Ebbsfleet Station providing local, regional and international train services. We are satisfied that the site and the proposed use are totally sustainable.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The appellant has taken on board all the Council's saved and Core Strategy policies to provide a sustainable solution to the beneficial use of this plot retaining its existing uses without any impact on the conservation area. It is our assertion that the site is sustainable in terms of its location within the urban area, its proximity to local transport modes and the prospective layout are in keeping with the good design principles outlined in the NPPF. It would provide a small unit of accommodation, for which there is an unfulfilled demand in the area, and provide for the complete refurbishment of the heritage asset within its Conservation Area setting .

6.2 It is a site that fulfils the requirements of the NPPF in supporting a presumption in favour. The proposal would not be out of character or at odds with the area. There would be no adverse impact on the amenities of nearby residents and would result in the preservation and enhancement of the building.

James Barron BA(Hons) DipTP MRTPI